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Cyrus and was begun directly by Sheshbazzar, and it has been building ever since! This is nothing new, but merely the continuation of a building begun long ago! If the Jews had said to the satrap, Cyrus commanded the building of this temple long ago, but it is only now that we have begun to fulfil Cyrus' decree, they would have ruined their case at the very outset. The objection that the writer would surely have indicated that this was a diplomatic answer is to my mind unwarranted. Why does Batten never even mention this explanation?

The second reason, "the silence of Haggai and Zechariah about interference from any source whatever" (p. 20), is removed by the simple reference to Zech. 4:6-10. Why should Zechariah think it necessary to speak of the mountains of difficulties and assure Zerubbabel that he shall after all be enabled to complete the work which he had begun, unless there actually was interference from some source?

The third argument, that in Ezra 4:1-3, "the Samaritans desired to aid the Jews in building and there is in that story no note of any opposition," is possible only because Batten separates 4:4, 5 from 4:1-5 and because of his remarkable textual reconstruction of Ezra 3:3. After Rothstein in his *Juden und Samaritaner* (1908) had showed the close relation between Ezra 4:1-6 and Hag. 2:10-14 such reasoning should have been impossible. That the opposition of the Samaritans was *purely* political is in view of Hag. 2:10-14 and Ezra 4:1-3 to say the least unlikely. Did they take the rebuff administered to them by Zerubbabel so lightly?

I must bring this review to a close. It is too long as it is. Others will take up other aspects of the commentary into which so much hard, patient, and painstaking work has gone. I thought it wisest to investigate the foundations and to test primarily Batten's own original contributions, i.e., especially Ezra, chaps. 1-6, where, as he himself says, his results show "the greatest divergence from the conclusions of other students" (p. 32).

JULIUS A. BEWER

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

### THE PROPHET AND HIS PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

The most conspicuous result of modern criticism, from the religious point of view, is the new interest it has lent to prophecy, as the really creative influence in the onward movement of faith. This interest con-

<sup>1</sup> *The Prophet and His Problems*. By J. M. Powis Smith. New York: Scribner, 1914. xi+244 pages. \$1.25.

tinues unabated. The last few years have witnessed the emergence of quite an extensive library on the prophets and their problems. Among recent students in this field Professor Smith occupies a foremost place. If we mistake not, he will ere long enrich Old Testament scholarship with a comprehensive treatment of the subject, as illumined by the newer light. His present purpose is more modest. By a series of "illustrative sections" he seeks to give the general reader a true appreciation of the marvelous story of the prophets, that they may be stimulated to read the story more fully for themselves. And certainly the study of these "sections" does whet the appetite. Under Dr. Smith's skilful guidance we are brought continually into touch with vital issues. We feel how pure a light that of prophecy was, how genuine and deep was the prophets' sense of God, and how much they can still contribute to the solution of life's problems if we read their words aright.

Though Dr. Smith makes no pretension here of writing for the expert, he shows the master's hand at every turn, and is not afraid to strike out paths of his own, where the current treatment of prophecy seems to lead but to culs-de-sac. This healthy independence is evident from the first chapter, which deals with "Semitic Prophets." In certain circles it has become almost an axiom that Hebrew prophecy is a borrowed light from Canaan. Dr. Smith throws his gaze over a much wider field, and traces the workings of the spirit of prophecy through various parts of the Semitic world—Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria—leading to the conclusion that "Semites all alike apparently possessed the original endowment of the prophetic spirit," though it was in Israel that "this spirit yielded its choicest fruit" (p. 34). The three following chapters—on "Primitive Hebrew Prophets," "False Prophets," and "Prediction"—elucidate the true idea of prophecy. In three further "illustrative sections" Dr. Smith reviews the prophetic attitude to home, state, and the individual respectively, while in a closing chapter he unveils the heart of the prophets' religion. Of these chapters the most original is that on "A Prophet's Marriage," where he breaks a lance with the now prevailing interpretation of Hosea, chaps. 1-3, and reads the tragic story in the most literal sense, as the prophet's marriage with a woman whom he knew to be a harlot. Even those of us who are repelled by such a reading must pay deference to Dr. Smith's fresh and forceful treatment of the theme. When he passes from such controversial questions to follow the growing light of prophecy as it expands itself over both national and individual life, we accompany him with cordial sympathy. The very essence of prophecy was moral and religious progress. The prophetic religion "was

made in the full light of world-history. It grew as the mind of Israel grew. It laid hold upon the great world-movements of the time and claimed them for itself and for its God" (p. 231). And the same spirit dwells among ourselves, leading us into all truth. "The world-view of today is separated from that of the prophets [of Israel] by centuries of study and experience." Thus "he who would slavishly seek to imitate them would totally misunderstand their spirit. It is for the modern prophet rather to face the facts of life with open eye, to read the message of God to the age as it is revealed in those facts and processes [which history and science reveal], and to surrender himself in the full assurance of faith to the task of declaring and interpreting that message to his fellow-men. So will prophecy live again and religion once more become a quickening power upon the minds of men" (p. 233).

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE  
MONTREAL

ALEX. R. GORDON

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### THE EVOLUTION OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

The title of this valuable and interesting volume is misleading. Instead of "The Evolution of Early Christianity" it should be called "The Environment of Early Christianity," for it is with the latter subject that the author chiefly deals, and his account of the development of Christianity, so far as he treats the matter at all, is fragmentary and incidental. That the book is misnamed, however, does not impair its value. As a matter of fact it contains an excellent picture of the world, particularly the religious world, into which Christianity was born, and it thus serves a very useful purpose. The author is entirely right in regarding the study of that world as a matter of fundamental importance for the student of Christian history. Without a knowledge of it one must go altogether astray in trying to understand the origin and development of Christianity and in interpreting its historical significance. The author is right also in thinking it worth while to gather up and present in brief and orderly fashion some of the principal results of the new lines of study which have been carried on by many scholars with extraordinary vigor for a number of years past. A book of this kind is bound to be widely useful to students, and its extensive and well-selected bibliographies give it a double value. The field with which it deals is vast

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Early Christianity. A Genetic Study of First Century Christianity in Relation to Its Religious Environment.* By Shirley Jackson Case. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1914. ix+385 pages. \$2.00.